

# before, & after an EARTHQUAKE



Tips on:

Preparation

How to best survive an earthquake

What to check when it's over

# California State Senate

**SENATOR ALEX PADILLA**  
TWENTIETH SENATE DISTRICT

**Dear Friend,**

A recent study by the United States Geological Survey predicted a 62 percent chance of a major earthquake during the next 30 years and that it could strike at any time. No one wants to think about experiencing an earthquake, but since most Californians live near an active fault line, everyone should be fully prepared.

The first 72 hours after an earthquake are critical. Public safety officials, such as police and fire departments, will be overwhelmed with requests for help – especially those in the most severely devastated areas. It is critical that residents are prepared to safely survive the initial days after a quake without outside help.

While it seems impossible, a little basic planning and thinking ahead can go a long way toward protecting you and your family during an earthquake. This brochure provides important information on steps you can take before, during and after a quake to protect you and your family, your home and your neighborhood.

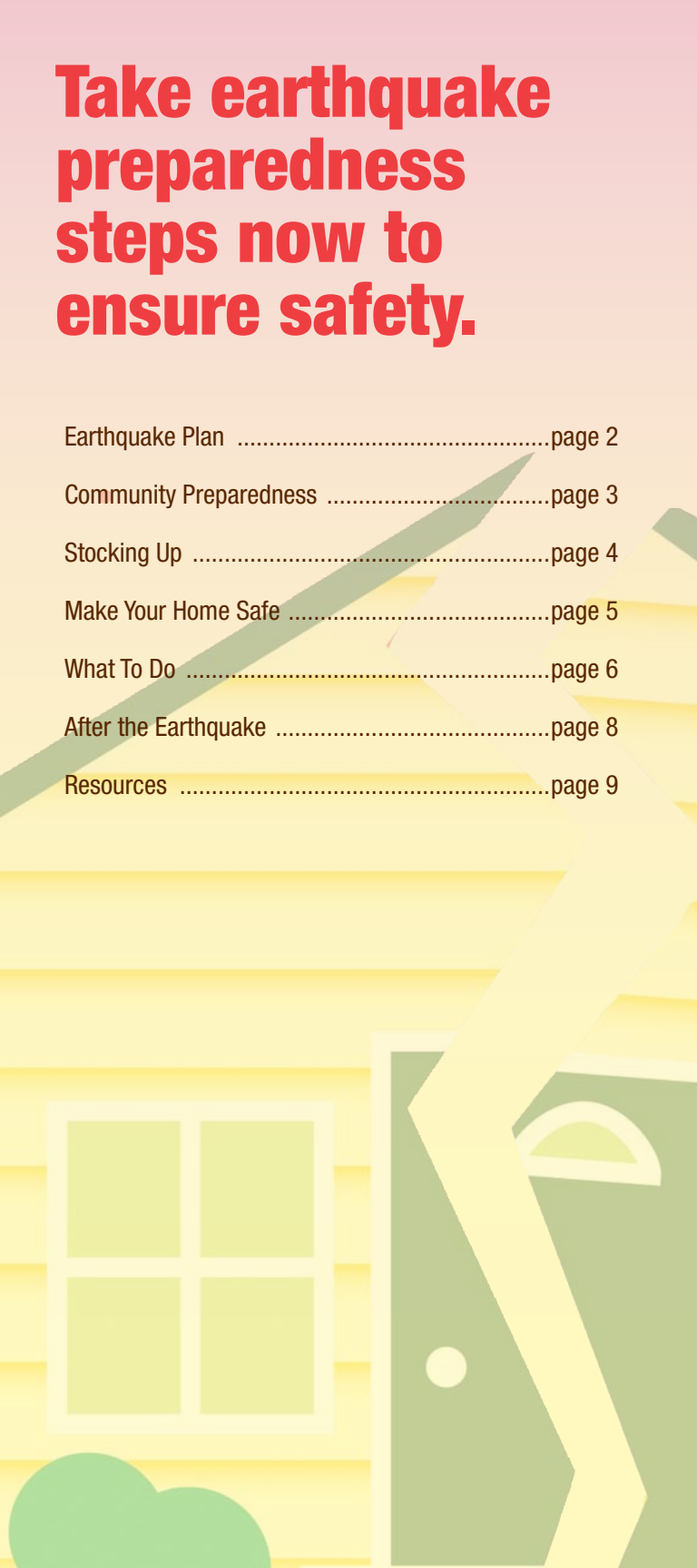
Don't wait until it's too late. Plan today so that you're prepared for tomorrow.

Sincerely,

**Senator Alex Padilla**

# Take earthquake preparedness steps now to ensure safety.

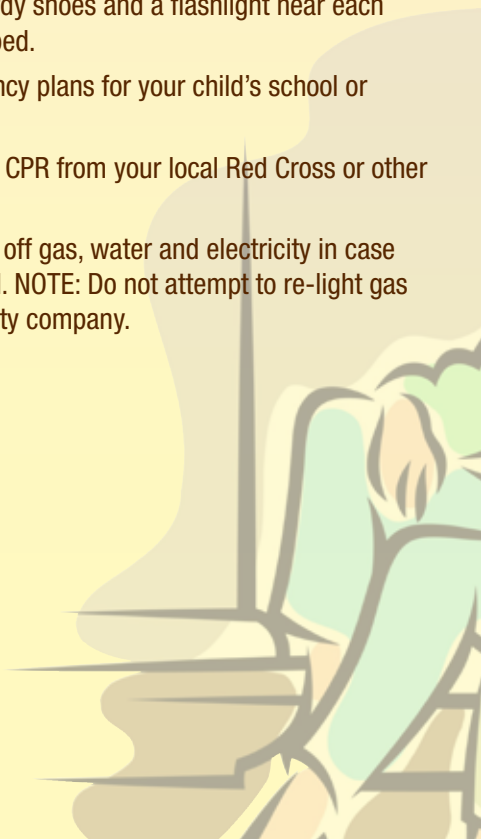
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# Develop a family earthquake plan.

Every household needs an emergency plan. How well you survive an earthquake often depends on how well you prepare beforehand. Developing a plan and practicing it are the first steps to survival.

- Decide how and where your family will reunite if you are separated.
- Select an out-of-town friend or relative who separated family members can call after the quake to report their location and condition.
- Know the safe spots in each room: under sturdy tables, desks or against inside walls.
- Know the dangerous areas: windows, mirrors, hanging objects, fireplaces and tall, unsecured furniture.
- Practice earthquake drills with children so they'll immediately know what to do if a quake strikes.
- Keep a pair of sturdy shoes and a flashlight near each family member's bed.
- Know the emergency plans for your child's school or daycare center.
- Learn first aid and CPR from your local Red Cross or other organization.
- Learn how to shut off gas, water and electricity in case lines are damaged. NOTE: Do not attempt to re-light gas pilots. Call the utility company.



# Community Preparedness.

- Identify local organizations that have preparedness programs in place or have acquired special training to be of assistance in the event of an earthquake. Suggest to those that don't to consider developing an emergency plan.
- Know your neighbors and their skills: you may be able to help each other after an earthquake. Also know where to go to help your community after a disaster. It may be days before outside emergency assistance arrives.
- Attend training for neighborhood residents in preparedness and first aid.
- Identify neighbors who have special needs or will require special assistance.
- Have your neighborhood develop a secret signal to notify friends if everyone and everything is OK. Don't use obvious signals. This could identify vacant houses to criminals.



# Stocking up.

When preparing for an earthquake, plan on having enough supplies to get you and your family through at least the first 72 hours. Stocking up on emergency supplies can add to your safety and comfort.

- **Food.** Enough for 72 hours, preferably one week.
- **Water.** Enough so each person has a gallon a day for 72 hours, preferably one week. Store in airtight containers and replace them every six months. Store disinfectants such as iodine tablets or chlorine bleach, eight drops per gallon, to purify water if necessary.
- **First aid kit.** Make sure it's well stocked, especially with bandages and disinfectants.
- **Fire extinguisher.** Your fire extinguisher should be suitable for all types of fires. Teach all family members how to use it.
- **Flashlights with extra batteries.** Keep flashlights beside your bed and in several other locations. DO NOT use matches or candles after an earthquake until you are certain there are no gas leaks.
- **Portable radio with extra batteries.** Most telephones will be out of order or limited to emergency use. The radio will be your best source of information.
- **Extra blankets, clothing, shoes and money.**
- **Alternate cooking sources.** Store a barbecue or camping stove for outdoor cooking. CAUTION: Ensure there are no gas leaks before you use any kind of fire as a cooking source and do not use charcoal indoors.
- **Special items.** Have at least a week's supply of medications and food for infants and those with special needs. Don't forget pet food.
- **Tools.** Have an adjustable or pipe wrench for turning off gas and water.

# Make your home safe.

The greatest risk of injury during an earthquake is from non-structural hazards. Falling decorative pieces, fixtures and heavy furniture account for a large percentage of injuries. Here are some tips on making your home safe:

- Check chimneys, roof, walls and foundation for stability.
- Make sure your house is bolted to its foundation.
- Secure water heater and appliances that could move enough to break utility lines.
- Keep breakables and heavy objects on bottom shelves.
- Secure heavy, tall furniture that could tip over.
- Secure hanging plants and heavy picture frames or mirrors – especially over beds.
- Put latches on cabinet doors to keep them closed during shaking.
- Keep flammable or hazardous liquids in cabinets or secured on lower shelves.



# What to do.

When the ground starts to shake...no matter where you are, know how to protect yourself and your family during an earthquake.

**Indoors.** If you're indoors, stay there and get under a desk or table or stand in a corner. Practice the duck, cover and hold technique shown below so you'll immediately know what to do during an earthquake. If you're in a high-rise building, stay away from windows and outside walls. Get under a table. Do not use elevators.

## Duck.

Duck, or drop down on the floor.



## Cover.

Take cover under a sturdy desk, table or other furniture. If that is not possible, seek cover against an interior wall and protect your head and neck with your hands. Avoid danger spots near windows, hanging objects, mirrors or tall furniture.



## Hold.

If you take cover under a sturdy piece of furniture, hold on to it and be prepared to move with it. Hold the position until the ground stops shaking and it is safe to move.





If you are in a wheelchair, stay in it. Move to cover if possible and lock your wheels. Protect your head with your arms.

**In a bed.** If you're in bed when a quake strikes – and if the ground is not shaking hard enough to prevent you from walking – move under a strong desk or table. If the ground is shaking too hard for you to move, remain in bed and cover your head with your hands and arms.

**In the car.** Pull over to the side of the road and stop. Avoid overpasses and power lines. Stay inside until shaking is over.

**Outdoors.** Get into an open area away from trees, buildings and power lines. If you're on a sidewalk near buildings, duck into a doorway to protect yourself from falling bricks, glass, plaster and other debris.



# After the Earthquake.

After a quake, be prepared for aftershocks. Each time you feel one – **DUCK, COVER, AND HOLD!** Plan where you can take cover if and when they occur.

Remain calm and be sure to:

## Check for injuries.

- Apply first aid.
- Do not move seriously injured individuals unless they are in immediate danger.

## Check for damage.

- Hunt for hazards.
- Check for gas and water leaks, broken electrical wiring or sewage lines. If there is damage, turn utility off at the source.
- Check building for cracks and damage, including roof, chimneys and foundation.
- If you evacuate, post a message inside to let family members know where you've gone.

## Keep lines of communication and roadways open.

- Do not use the telephone immediately unless there is a serious injury or fire.
- Do not use your vehicle unless there is an emergency. Keep the streets clear for emergency vehicles.
- Turn your portable radio on for instructions and news reports.

## Stay alert.

- Be prepared for aftershocks.
- Remain calm and help others in your area.

# Resources.

## **Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA)**

Website .....fema.gov

Emergency preparedness publications ..... 800-480-2520

24-hour disaster info hotline ..... 800-621-3362 (FEMA)

## **California Office of Emergency Services (OES)**

Website ..... oes.ca.gov

General Information ..... 916-845-8200

## **Red Cross**

To find a shelter, obtain emergency food, water and other disaster relief, contact your local Red Cross chapter.

Website .....redcross.org

800-REDCROSS (800-733-2767)

or 800-257-7575 (Español)

## **U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)**

The USGS has the lead Federal responsibility to provide notification of earthquakes in order to enhance public safety and to reduce losses through effective forecasts based on the best possible scientific information.

Website ..... usgs.gov

## **The US Department of Homeland Security**

“Be Smart. Be Responsible. Be Prepared. Be Ready!”

Brochures ..... ready.gov



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